



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

August 22, 2005

# News Release

## **DRUG TRAFFICKERS SENTENCED TO LENGTHY PRISON TERMS**

*Used armored vehicles and semi-automatic weapons to conduct business*

MCALLEN, Texas — Three convicted drug traffickers were sentenced Friday to hefty prison terms for trafficking and attempting to distribute more than nine tons of marijuana, announced U.S. Attorney Chuck Rosenberg, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Special Agent-in-Charge Alonzo Pena, who heads the ICE San Antonio office.

The drug traffickers sentenced were: Salvador Garcia, 45, and his brother, Jorge Rolando Garcia Sr., 53, both of Rio Grande City, Texas; and Toribio Arriaga Guerrero, a Mexican national residing in Mission, Texas.

U.S. District Judge Randy Crane sentenced Salvador Garcia to serve a total of 30 years in federal prison, without parole, for conspiracy, and possession with intent to distribute a total of 4,229 kilograms (9,304 lbs.) of marijuana, while maintaining a stash house for the contraband. Garcia was convicted of these charges following a jury trial in May 2005. Garcia was also sentenced to serve five years for each of the 22 money-laundering convictions that a jury found him guilty of during the February trial. Judge Crane ordered Garcia to serve all of the sentences concurrently. He was also ordered to pay over \$7.5 million in fines.

Salvador Garcia's brother and co-conspirator, Jorge Rolando Garcia Sr. 53, and Toribio Arriaga Guerrero were also sentenced Friday. Jorge Garcia will be serving a total of 20 years in federal prison without parole for conspiracy and possession with intent to distribute 3,470 kilograms (7,634 lbs.) of marijuana. Toribio Arriaga Guerrero was sentenced to a total of 20 years conspiracy and possession with intent to distribute 759 kilograms (1,670 lbs.) of marijuana. During a May 13 jury trial, Jorge Garcia and Guerrero were found guilty of narcotics trafficking, along with Salvador Garcia.

Salvador Garcia was convicted based upon evidence that proved Garcia used his property in the Midway area of Starr County as a passageway for drugs to be brought into the United States from Miguel Aleman, Mexico. Once the drugs were ferried across the Rio Grande River, they would be picked up at the landing site on the Salvador Garcia property and transported by truck to various stash houses in both Rio Grande City and McAllen, Texas. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) seized a load of marijuana at Garcia's property in November 2003, as well as a fully loaded AR-15 semi-automatic assault rifle, a 1999 fully armored Grand Jeep Cherokee that also had switches for electric door shock, tear gas, and smoke screen, and a fully armored 1995 Grand Marquis. These vehicles were registered to members of Salvador Garcia's immediate family.

On Dec. 2, 2003, agents of the Starr County High Intensity Drug Task Force (HIDTA) also seized 7,650 pounds of marijuana from 46 Aqua Verde Rd. in Rio Grande City, a property owned and used by Jorge Rolando Garcia as a stash location for the Salvador Garcia organization. Toribio Arriaga Guerrero acted as a lookout for the organization.

Salvador Garcia was also convicted in February on 22 counts of structuring cash deposits of approximately \$532,010 in drug money through his bank accounts in amounts under \$10,000.

This Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation involved agents of the U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), CBP, and the Starr County HIDTA Task Force.

Assistant U. S. Attorney Toni Trevino prosecuted the case.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*